Shope Landfill, Pa., is the 400th Superfund construction completion in the nation. The Food Quality Protection Act creates Office of Children's Health Protection. American Heritage Rivers Initiative is launched to help communities

FUTURE CHALLENGES

Smart Growth — Challenge of Urban Sprawl

The air, water and land we depend on are being threatened by unplanned or poorly planned development. Our communities, ecosystems and yes, our planet, are suffering from overwhelming growth. Between 1970 and 1990, almost 20 million acres of rural land were developed nationwide. A total of 400,000 acres a year are used for residential and commercial development. In 1998, voters passed 170 of 240 local ballot initiatives to reduce urban sprawl and created over $7.5 billion in new funds to protect open space.

After World War II, city dwellers began to abandon compact urban neighborhoods for newly built suburbs at the edge of the city. This outward migration continues unabated to the present day. The population of the Austin metropolitan region increased 30 percent from 846,227 in 1990 to 1,105,909 in 1998, while only 10 percent of growth is in Austin's urban core. Air pollution, traffic and a lack of affordable housing are threatening the quality of life. Citizens are starting to realize the cost of rapid growth. In 1998, Austin voters agreed to higher water rates to raise $65 million to preserve 15,000 acres of land outside the city.

Texas's healthy economy continues to create jobs and attract workers. Texas's population is expected to rise 66 percent from 20 million to 33.8 million between 2000 and 2030. By 2030, nine out of ten new residents will be minorities; three out of four will be Hispanic. From 1982 to 1992, Texas lost nearly a half million acres of farmland — more than any other state.

The Dallas-Fort Worth area added more than 250 residents a day between 1990 and 1998, fueling a 19 percent growth rate — more than twice that of any other metropolitan areas its size or larger. As the core city remains stable in size, suburbs are growing at a rapid rate. Lack of natural barriers to expansion provides more room for population growth. In 1996, residents of the Dallas metropolitan area traveled an average of 29.8 miles per day per person, and spent nearly 55 hours per person in traffic.

The Houston-Galveston-Bazoria area ranked second with a 18 percent growth rate — ahead of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Detroit, Boston, New York and Philadelphia. In 1999, the Houston metropolitan area showed the

requires reasonable certainty of no harm from pesticides used on foods. 1997 EPA Administrator Carol Browner restore and revitalize waters and waterfronts. 1998 Clean Water Action Plan announced to have local, state, and

highest air quality reading for ozone smog in the country.

Texas border cities of Laredo and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission showed tremendous growth rates of 41 percent and 36 percent from 1990 to 1998, respectively. El Paso, Texas showed an 18 percent population growth rate reaching 703,127 residents in 1998.

In Arkansas, the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers area grew 29 percent from 210,908 in 1990 to 272,615 in 1998. In Little Rock, population remained constant while land use doubled to nearly 200 square miles.

In New Mexico, Santa Fe had a 21 percent growth rate from 117,043 to 141,730, and Las Cruces showed a 24 percent growth rate from 135,510 to 169,165 during the same period.

Many challenges impact our quality of life. Loss of green space to sprawl and development. Polluted runoff from highways, cities and factory farms. Aging infrastructure in cities and towns. More cars driving longer distances. Greater demands for electricity and fuels. Abandoned factories and commercial sites in inner cities. Any of these left unmet could impact our communities.

Looking to the Future

In facing these challenges, we must continue working together — leveraging our resources and building stronger alliances. The face of tomorrow's landscape depends upon our activities today.

Air pollution in the Central-South states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas is a major environmental challenge. Many of our cities' air quality is not improving quickly enough to keep up with growth. In Texas, nearly one-half of the population lives in areas not meeting national health-based air quality standards. As we learn more about the health impacts of ozone smog and soot, stricter standards are needed to protect people, especially the elderly and children. Many of our cities are barely meeting these health-based standards and may not meet new national air quality standards being proposed to protect public health. EPA has adopted national standards for cleaner-burning fuels and vehicles which will help our communities face the clean air challenge. In the Central-South region, alliances with local and state leadership like those demonstrated in Tulsa, Austin, Baton Rouge, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio are essential to bring about common-sense controls to air pollution.

Water pollution, as well as increased demands for clean water, is impacted by development along our rivers, lakes and streams. Runoff

Houston faces significant air quality challenges. In 1999, 15 of the nation's 30 highest ozone smog readings were in Texas. Photo: Houston Chronicle.

federal organizations and agencies work together to fulfill the goal of fishable and swimmable waters for all

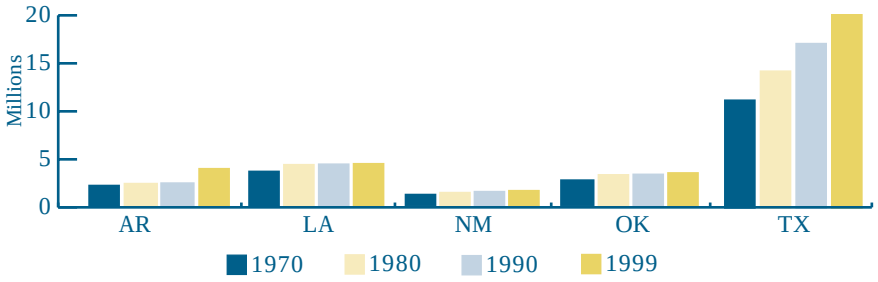
1999 Nationally, 650 Superfund site cleanups were completed, accounting for half of all site cleanups. Radon testing is required

from farmland and city streets pollutes our water. No longer can we regulate factories separately. To get there, we must look at the cumulative impact of many sources of pollution on the same river. Programs emphasized in EPA's Clean Water Action Plan will help to identify and control these sources of water pollution. Partnerships with the Central-South states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas are vital to our achieving healthy water.

Loss of green space and increase in abandoned land challenge communities throughout the region. More incentives for reusing abandoned and toxic waste sites in cities and rural communities are needed. Maintaining green, pristine land and wetlands provides us healthy places to escape the daily grind and live. Brownfields redevelopment, transportation and urban planning programs are working to offset some of the impacts to sprawl. Three of our five states have federally endorsed voluntary clean-up programs to speed redevelopment of abandoned properties.

Population growth in our urban centers and along the Texas-Mexico border challenges public utilities and services. Providing equal protection and equal hope for

Population of Region 6



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

communities throughout the Central-South is essential to improving the environment that impacts us all. Many times, education and collaboration with these communities can yield great results. Other times money for infrastructure — sewers, drinking water, garbage disposal — and local people to run them are needed to ensure the health of an entire community.

Loss of wetlands and green space to development reduces natural treatment and filtering of pollution. Focusing on ecosystems by looking at pollution sources throughout entire geographic areas is yielding results. Each day, more and more communities are banding together to protect their vital resources and improve public health. Pollution does not recognize geographic or political boundaries. More needs to be done. Stronger alliances are needed to create shared goals and improve these large-scale, complex problems. It is essential to the well-being of everyone.

Finally, we must continually evaluate our health-based standards using strong science and modern technology. It continues to be the age of discovery. We must evaluate chemical impacts on communities, both people and places. We must use new technologies to reduce pollution from current sources. Government, businesses and industry must face the technology challenges in collecting and reporting environmental information. We must look for new ways to share information with people. An informed public will make better environmental and public health decisions.

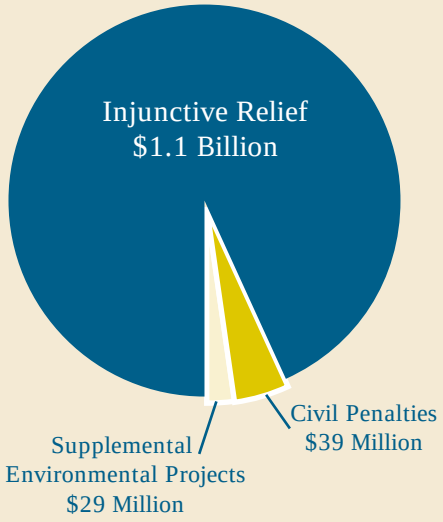
To meet the environmental challenges of today and tomorrow, each of us individually and collectively must do our part.

Americans. Underground storage tanks must meet strict requirements for spill, overfill, and corrosion protection. to buy a home in most states. Occupants living in pre-1978 multi-family housing must be notified prior to any renovation. 2000

Enforcing Environmental Laws

To maintain a balanced playing field for industry and business and ensure fair competition, enforcement of the environmental laws is essential. The region has aggressive civil and criminal enforcement programs. We are continuing to work with our state and industry partners to build enforcement and environmental compliance programs, as well as aggressively pursue criminal actions when necessary.

Enforcement Accomplishments 1996 - 1999



Civil Enforcement

EPA and the State of Texas sued Koch Pipeline for hundreds of oil spills in Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. A settlement was reached requiring Koch to pay $30 million in penalties, making it the largest Clean Water Act settlement in history. Koch will also undertake $5 million worth of environmental projects for pipeline safety and education, and wetlands restoration.

Johnson Properties violated the nation's clean water laws by failing to operate 175 wastewater treatment facilities in Louisiana. Improper operation caused raw sewage to back up into homes, schoolyards and city streets — threatening public health. For only the second time in history, EPA took over operation of the privately owned treatment facilities through a court-appointed receiver.

McKinney Smelting violated our hazardous waste laws by poorly managing lead and PCB waste in Texas. A total of over 2,000 tons of contaminated soil was removed from the site and over $1 million was used to return the property to productive use. Lead is known to impact the development of young children, and PCBs can cause cancer.

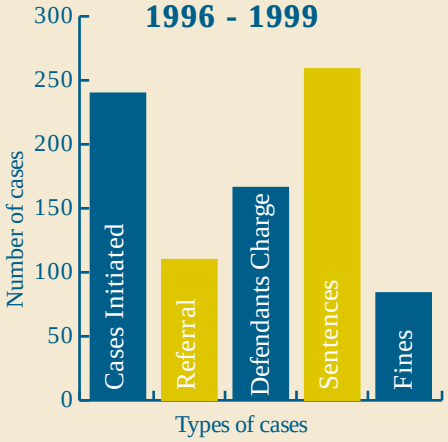
Petroleum Wholesale, Inc. violated the federal underground storage tank laws at 7 facilities in Houston Texas by operating storage tanks without adequate leak detection. Over 80 violations were discovered, resulting in a $274,000 penalty. Undetected leaks can cause irreparable harm to ground water.

Encycle/Asarco in Texas, Montana, and Tennessee, improperly treated, stored and disposed of over 500 tons of highly toxic waste. Over $5.5 million for injunctive relief and penalties was awarded. It is essential to communities that companies manage hazardous waste safely.

Criminal Enforcement

In Baton Rouge, the

Major Criminal Enforcement Cases 1996 - 1999



superintendent and former foreman at the former Hall Buck Marine River Plant were sentenced to prison for violating the nation's clean water laws. They were charged with illegally discharging polluted waste from their barge-cleaning operation into the Mississippi River. Previously, the plant plead guilty to Clean Water act violations and paid $440,000 in fines and $4 million in clean-up costs.

In a 1998, joint Texas, City of Dallas, and EPA action, Herman Nethery received the most severe sentence ordered in Texas for an environmental crime: 30 years in prison, $100,000 fine, and $125,900 in restitution. Mr. Nethery operated an illegal landfill in southeast Dallas, the largest illegal dump in the state of Texas.

In a 1999 joint EPA and State of Texas action, company officials were convicted of criminal charges in Texas for violating the federal clean air laws. The Huntsman Port Arthur plant manager and Jefferson County environmental manager were convicted and face up to 25 years in prison and a fine of up to $1.25 million.